

# **2018 Water Strategy Framework for Implementation**

## **Priority Area: Achieve a 40% phosphorous reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin**

Under Annex 4 (Nutrients) of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Michigan committed to achieve a 40% phosphorus reduction in the Western Lake Erie Basin, and through the 2015 Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, has committed to achieving these reductions by 2025, with an interim goal of 20% reduction by 2020. The Michigan Water Strategy includes a recommendation to support this commitment.

In February 2018, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes (OGL) released the Michigan Domestic Action Plan (DAP). The DAP describes monitoring, assessment and progress tracking efforts to ensure that on-the-ground actions are effectively moving toward the reduction goals. The agencies are working proactively to identify and implement management and prevention strategies for phosphorus pollution in the Western Lake Erie Basin, including: regulations, research, monitoring, technical assistance, outreach and education actions described below. To date, Michigan is on track to meet its reduction commitments. More information on the DAP can be found at [www.michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP](http://www.michigan.gov/LakeErieDAP).

### **Major Initiatives:**

- The MDEQ will continue to work closely with the Great Lakes Water Authority, Wayne County Downriver, Ypsilanti Community Utility Authority, and Monroe Metro Wastewater Treatment Facilities to maintain and achieve total phosphorus (TP) limits of 0.7 mg/l monthly average, and 0.6 mg/l growing season average (Apr. – Sept.) under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits issued to the Southeast Michigan facilities.
- The MDEQ and MDARD are implementing annual monitoring plans in coordination with Indiana and Ohio in priority areas of the Maumee River Watershed. The MDEQ is also continuing to support the development Watershed Management Plans for the Tiffin and Bean sub-watersheds located in Michigan's portion of the Maumee River Watershed.
- The MDEQ, MDNR, and MDARD are supporting two research projects to better understand the causes of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). The OGL staff is serving as the co-chair of the Great Lakes HABs Collaboratory, which seeks to improve information sharing between scientists and decision-makers on issues related to HABs in the Great Lakes.
- The MDARD and MDEQ have initiated a five-year research project to determine if controlled drainage and saturated buffers can improve surface water quality, determine the effectiveness of controlled drainage for reducing nutrient transport of phosphorus and nitrogen, and assess the impact the drainage has on crop yield.
- The MDEQ will continue to implement phosphorus reductions in the River Raisin Watershed by supporting pass-through grants that target farm conservation planning, livestock management strategies, and drainage water management strategies.
- The MDARD will continue to maintain and expand partnerships to provide technical and financial assistance to farmers through cost share efforts such as the Tri-State Western

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Lake Erie Basin Phosphorus Initiative Regional Conservation Partners Program, the Farmer Led Conservation Effort, a Michigan State University phosphorus reduction grant, and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

- The MDARD will increase and maintain MAEAP practice implementation and verification for long-term water quality improvement of cropland acres managed under Nutrient Management Plan acreage by 35,000 annually; maintain a minimum of 85% reverification rate for farms; and increase participants to 120% of FY17 levels.
- The MDARD, MDNR, OGL, and MDEQ will develop a communications strategy to increase outreach to the public. The MDARD will also work with agriculture partners to conduct targeted outreach and raise awareness of MAEAP benefits, including hosting farmer focus groups in 2018 to gather feedback on conservation outreach methods and messaging.
- The MDARD, MDEQ, and OGL will promote wetland restoration and other land management initiatives to reduce phosphorus loading by develop innovative land management strategies; reviewing current best management practices; and prioritizing the purchase of conservation easements.

### **AGENCY CONTACTS:**

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